

## **Q&A: Flu Season 2005-06 and Flu Vaccine Update**

### **Is CDC recommending that inactivated influenza vaccine (“flu shots”) go to “priority groups”, as was recommended last season? Updated 09/13/05**

To ensure that people who are at highest risk of complications from influenza have access to vaccine, CDC recommends that certain priority groups receive inactivated influenza vaccine (i.e., the “flu shot”) until October 24, 2005. Beginning October 24, 2005, all persons will be eligible for vaccination.

The following are the priority groups that should be targeted to receive inactivated influenza vaccine (i.e., the flu shot) prior to October 24, 2005:

- Persons aged 65 years and older, with and without chronic health conditions
- Residents of long-term care facilities
- Persons aged 2–64 years with chronic health conditions
- Children aged 6–23 months
- Pregnant women
- Health-care personnel who provide direct patient care
- Household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children aged <6 months

It should be noted that vaccination with the live, nasal-spray flu vaccine (FluMist®) is always an option for healthy persons aged 5-49 years who are not pregnant. This vaccine is not subject to prioritization and can be given to healthy 5-49 year olds at any time.

### **Are there any locations, besides my doctor’s office, where I can get a flu shot?**

**Updated 09/13/05**

Anyone wanting a flu shot should call his or her doctor. If they don’t have a doctor, they can call 2-1-1 to locate a physician or community flu clinic in their neighborhood. A listing of community flu clinics will also be available at [www.vaxhawaii.com](http://www.vaxhawaii.com) after September 19, 2005.

### **How much flu vaccine will be available for the 2005-06 influenza season nationwide?**

**Updated 09/13/05**

Because of the uncertainties regarding production of influenza vaccine, the exact number of available doses and the timing of vaccine distribution for the 2005–06 influenza season remain unknown. Four manufacturers expect to provide influenza vaccine to the U.S. market during the 2005–06 influenza season. Sanofi Pasteur, Inc., projects production of up to 60 million doses of inactivated influenza vaccine (“flu shots”). Chiron Corporation projects production of 18–26 million doses of inactivated influenza vaccine. GlaxoSmithKline, Inc. (GSK), projects production of 8 million doses of inactivated influenza vaccine for U.S. distribution. MedImmune Vaccines, Inc., producer of the nasal-spray influenza vaccine (also called live attenuated influenza vaccine, or LAIV), projects having approximately 3 million doses available for distribution.

**Why have there been shortages or delays in the influenza vaccine supply during three of the last five influenza seasons? Updated 09/13/05**

Influenza viruses change from year to year, so influenza vaccines must be updated annually to include the viruses that will most likely circulate in the upcoming season. There is a very tight timeline for selecting the influenza vaccine virus strains, preparing the vaccine (which is a very complex process), manufacturing, and distributing the vaccine. Due to the time constraints, any problems encountered during the process may cause shortages or delays. In addition, the number of companies that manufacture influenza vaccine for the U.S. is small so problems with production for any company can have substantial impact on supply. During the 2005–06 influenza season, 4 manufacturers expect to provide influenza vaccine to the U.S. population: Sanofi Pasteur, Inc., MedImmune Vaccines, Inc., Chiron Corporation, and GlaxoSmithKline, Inc.